# I

# England's Place in Medieval Europe

This book concerns the rulers of England and their aspirations in the period between the Norman Conquest of 1066 and the death of Edward I in 1307. During these two and a half centuries England was dominated by men from overseas. This trend had begun before 1066 with the rule of the Danish king Cnut (1016–35) and of the half-Norman Edward the Confessor (1042–66), and it lingered on after 1272 in the French-speaking court of Edward I (1272–1307) and his successors. Nevertheless the most significant period of overseas domination of political and cultural life in the English kingdom followed the Norman Conquest and continued into the twelfth century and beyond. When the Norman dynasty failed in the male line with the death of Henry I in 1135, England became the battleground between two of William the Conqueror's grandchildren, Stephen and the Empress Matilda. On Stephen's death the kingdom was inherited by Henry II (1154–89), who was count of Anjou in his own right and duke of Aquitaine by marriage. The area of the king of England's political concern had therefore widened beyond William the Conqueror's Normandy to include Anjou and the huge lands of Aquitaine and Poitou south of the Loire. This extension of power is described by historians – though never by contemporaries – as the 'Angevin Empire', implying an overlordship by the dynasty of Anjou over England and half of modern France. According to Gerald of Wales, Henry hoped to extend his rule beyond France to Rome and the empire of Frederick Barbarossa.

In leading Christendom in the crusade against Saladin, Richard I (1189–99) was following in the footsteps of the Angevin kings of

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Jerusalem as well as fulfilling promises made by Henry II. His death in the struggle with Philip Augustus of France and King John's subsequent loss of Normandy to Philip did not bring an end either to overseas influence in England or to the ambitions of its kings, as John hoped to regain Normandy from his base in Poitou and Aquitaine. He established the strategy, which was vigorously pursued by his successor Henry III (1216–72), of using Poitevins as administrators and war captains in England. Through them and the support of the papacy Henry hoped to construct a system of alliances which would win his family the huge inheritance in Italy and Germany of the greatest of the medieval emperors, Frederick II, and thus surpass the achievements of Henry II and Richard I. 'We wish', wrote Pope Alexander IV in 1255, 'to exalt the royal family of England, which we view with special affection, above the other kings and princes of the world.'[1]

The rebellion of 1258 against Henry's Poitevins and papal ambitions compelled both king and barons to recognize the separateness of England: the king by conceding the Norman and Angevin lands to Louis IX of France in 1259, and the barons by forming their revolutionary commune of England. As if to emphasize the persistence of overseas influence, that commune was led by a Frenchman, Simon de Montfort. This period of rebellion and civil war marked a turning point in the definition of English identity. Its rulers thereafter continued to pursue overseas ambitions, first in France in the Hundred Years War and then as a worldwide maritime power, but they did so now as heads of an English nation and not as alien warlords like William the Conqueror and Henry II. In order to emphasize the influence of outsiders and at the same time to provide a chronological framework, this book is divided into parts comprising three periods each of about seventy years' duration: the Normans (comprising the reigns of William the Conqueror, William Rufus and Henry I); the Angevins (the reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I); the Poitevins (the reigns of John and Henry III). The titles 'Normans', 'Angevins' and 'Poitevins' are not intended to suggest that the rulers came exclusively from these regions, but that the king of England's predominant overseas connections shifted from Normandy in the eleventh century through Anjou in the twelfth to Poitou in the thirteenth. Edward I gave as high a priority as his predecessors to his possessions in France, while at the same time conducting large-scale wars in Wales and Scotland.

## England and its conquerors

The English had developed a settled identity precociously early among the European powers. The Anglo-Saxon kings of the tenth century, building on the achievements of Offa in Mercia and Alfred in Wessex, had created a single kingdom. At its best, a sacrosanct king headed a well-defined structure of authority (consisting of shires, hundreds and boroughs), which used a uniform system of taxation and coinage and a common written language in the Old English of writs and charters. Even the fragility of these achievements, in the face of the Danish and Norman invasions of the eleventh century, encouraged a sense of common identity in adversity, as the kingdom's misfortunes were attributed in such works as Wulfstan's *Sermon of the Wolf to the English* to the sinfulness of the people rather than to the shortcomings of the political system. Monastic writers were therefore able to transmit to their successors the hope that the English kingdom would emerge intact from foreign domination. Thus Orderic Vitalis, who was sent to Normandy when still a child to become a monk, nevertheless identified fiercely with England's woes. Describing Norman atrocities after the rebellion of Edwin and Morcar, he upbraids the Normans who 'did not ponder contritely in their hearts that they had conquered not by their own strength but by the will of almighty God, and had subdued a people that was greater, richer and older than they were'.[2] This sense of Englishness, transmitted like the English language as a mother tongue despite its disappearance in official circles, persisted as a powerful undercurrent throughout the twelfth century to emerge as a political force in the thirteenth. The isolated monks who continued with the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle after the Norman Conquest, noting for example that the year 1107 was the 'forty-first of French rule in this country', and the gregarious mothers and wet nurses who naturally spoke to their infants in English had together saved the nation's identity.

The unity of the English kingdom at the time of the Conquest was a sign not of its modernity by eleventh-century standards but of its antiquity. Its centralized government was based on the models of imperial Rome and the Carolingian empire, whereas the tendency of the tenth and eleventh centuries had been away from royal centralization and towards aristocratic feudalism. Power had shifted from kings and their hierarchies of officials towards self-sufficient knights in their

castles. Similarly the clergy were beginning to question the value of sanctified kings as their protectors and were demanding instead to be free from lay domination. 'Who does not know', asked Pope Gregory VII in 1081, 'that kings and dukes originated from those who, being ignorant of God, strove with blind greed and insufferable presumption to dominate their equals, that is their fellow men, by pride, violence, treachery and murder? And when they try to force the priests of the Lord to follow them, can kings not best be compared to him who is the head over all the children of pride? The devil.'[3] With the Norman Conquest and the civil wars of Stephen's and Henry II's reigns, England was therefore brought into the mainstream of European politics, where knights waged war from stone fortresses and clergy, educated at reformed monasteries and the new universities, claimed to be above royal power. The values and style of life of the two most admired Englishmen of the twelfth century, William the Marshal, the model of the new knighthood, and Thomas Becket, the martyr of the reformed clergy, would scarcely have been comprehensible to an Anglo-Saxon thane or bishop of a century earlier.

Such was the power of the new knights and clergy that they reshaped the traditional order of Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. England was not unique in experiencing foreign conquest. At the same time as William the Conqueror was establishing Norman rule in England, other Normans led by Robert Guiscard were forming a new lordship in southern Italy and Sicily by overawing the pope and the abbot of Monte Cassino and defeating the Byzantines and the Moslems. Similarly in 1085 Alfonso VI of Castile and Leon entered Toledo as conqueror of the Moslems and in 1099 the army of the First Crusade triumphantly entered Jerusalem. Although these conquests were not directly related to each other, they were due – whether in England, Italy, Spain or Palestine – to the superiority of mounted knights when inspired by a militant clergy.

In the opinion of the conquered people such invaders were no better than a rabble of robbers. This is how at first the English saw their Norman conquerors, how the Byzantines and the popes saw Robert Guiscard, and how the Moslems saw the Cid in Spain and the crusaders in the east. But in each case the invaders demonstrated that they were more than raiders and looters, as they established strong and resilient forms of government which, while depending on the use of force,

tempered and directed it through the disciplines of feudalism and the idealism of the reformed clergy. Feudal values, as enunciated in the *Song of Roland* (which is contemporary with the Norman Conquest and may have been sung at the battle of Hastings), gave knights a sense of hierarchy and of loyalty to their lords as well as an irrepressible pride and delight in their warhorses, armour and other instruments of bloodshed. Clerical idealism, as enunciated by Pope Urban II in his sermons launching the First Crusade (and before him by Gregory VII), acknowledged the savagery of knights but aimed to point them in a similar direction to the *Song of Roland*: they would be a *militia* fighting for Christ instead of a *malitia*, the servants of the devil and the embodiment of malice. Although the knights' new sense of righteousness brought only misfortune to those whom they killed, maimed and ransomed, it did make them a sufficiently disciplined and motivated force to build on the ruins of war. Often, too, their sense of realism as fighting men encouraged them to learn from those they conquered. The Normans in England took over and strengthened the Anglo-Saxon taxation and writ system, just as their counterparts in the Moslem lands of Sicily, Palestine and Spain benefited from the superior civilizations over which they ruled.

This book concentrates on the rulers of England more than on the peasants, or 'natives' as the lords called them. The peasants were 'natives' in the sense both of belonging to a subjugated nation, the English, and of being tied by their inferior birth to the land on which they lived and worked. Unlike the great majority of the population who were rooted to the soil, the lords exhibited their superior status by moving freely on horseback from place to place, as their life was spent in hunting and collecting levies of money and produce from their tenants. They exercised their power not only through physical force as knights but through intellectual superiority as clergy. The ideology and resources of the church were as essential to lordship as the skills and equipment of knighthood. The local bishop or abbot was often the brother or kinsman of the lord of the land. King Stephen, for example, depended frequently on his brother, Henry of Blois, who was bishop of Winchester for more than forty years (1129–71). This book therefore includes the higher clergy within its purview because they were worldly lords and rulers despite the insistence of ecclesiastical reformers on being a caste apart.

The power and aspirations of lordship, both clerical and lay, were manifested in buildings and works of art as well as through the personal presence of the knight on horseback and the cleric with his sacred scripture. Much of what most impressed people at the time has disappeared: the burnished war helmets and jewel-encrusted reliquaries, the robes and hangings of silk and ermine, the iron strong-boxes filled with gold. Nevertheless enough remains, particularly in the outer forms of castles and churches, to recall this lost way of life. Above all, illuminated manuscripts, many of which are almost perfectly preserved, radiate from their pages not only the colour and brilliance of Romanesque and Gothic art but the thought-worlds of their medieval creators. These works were the supreme products of lordship, the legacy which was deliberately left to posterity as a tribute to divine power from men who recognized their own skills. 'I am the prince of writers,' the inscription in the frame around Eadwine of Canterbury's portrait declares in *c.*1150, 'neither my praise nor my fame will die hereafter . . . The beauty of this book displays my genius; God accept it as a gift pleasing to him.'[4] The book which this portrait accompanies is a text of the psalms with three variant Latin texts (Gallican, Roman and Hebrew) and English and French translations. It illustrates very well the mastery of the rulers and the way they were part of the civilization of western Christendom as well as building on English traditions.

## Europe and the world

Knowledge of England's place in space and time was the speciality of monks and other clerical writers who inspired the men of action to their pilgrimages and crusades and recorded their deeds in chronicles and histories. Although much of this knowledge was inaccurate and some of it was fictitious, like Geoffrey of Monmouth's popular *History of the Kings of Britain*, which elaborated the story of King Arthur, it nevertheless gave the rulers a yardstick by which to measure their endeavours and achievements. Varying Voltaire's epigram, if Arthur did not exist it would be necessary to invent him. The monks of Glastonbury recognized this in 1191 when they discovered and exhumed the alleged bodies of Arthur and Guinevere. Arthur or no Arthur, it is a mistake to underestimate the range of knowledge which medi-

eval writers claimed to have or to dismiss altogether the existence of now lost books such as the one which Geoffrey of Monmouth said he had used. His contemporary, the historian William of Malmesbury, assumed a wide knowledge in his reading public. Defending in 1125 his decision to produce a history of the English bishops, he wrote: 'It was certainly slothful and degrading not to know the names of the principal men of our province when our knowledge otherwise extends as far as the tracts of India and whatever lies beyond, open to the boundless ocean.'[5]

In William's time the world was pictured schematically in *mappae mundi* as a circle with Jerusalem at the centre and the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe placed around it. Asia occupies the top half of the circle while Africa and Europe are placed in the bottom right- and left-hand quarters respectively. (Neither medieval Europeans, nor the Romans and Greeks who preceded them, had any certain knowledge of Africa south of the equator or of America and Australasia.) The whole circular landmass is surrounded by the 'boundless ocean' to which William of Malmesbury refers. What he meant by saying that our knowledge extends to India is that the conventional representation of three continents had been handed down from ancient geographers via the encyclopedist Isidore of Seville. William and his fellow western Christians had no knowledge from experience of either Asia or Africa, although that was beginning to change now that crusaders and Italian merchants were establishing themselves all around the Mediterranean. Representations of the earth in the form of Jerusalem-centred world maps were a step back rather than forwards from the point of view of geographical science. Thus the large circular wall-map at Hereford cathedral, attributed to Richard of Haldingham and drawn in the late thirteenth century, is less accurate in its representation of Britain, though it is more detailed, than the square map in the British Library (MS Tiberius B.v) which dates from about AD 1000.

Jerusalem-centred maps showed the world as planned by God rather than according to what was known about it by physical scientists. Sometimes God, as the creator of heaven and earth, is depicted hovering protectively above the map with his angels in the star-filled universe. Such maps represent with accuracy not the relationships of places as measured by fallible men but the words of scripture: 'Thus saith the Lord God: this is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of the

nations and countries that are round about her.' St Jerome comments on this passage from Ezekiel (5 : 5) that Jerusalem is sited in the centre of the world because it is the umbilical cord which connects divine life with earthly life. Jerusalem-centred maps, which become the standard form in the twelfth century, also represent contemporary aspirations. In William of Malmesbury's account of Urban II's speech at Clermont launching the First Crusade the pope uses the image of the *mappa mundi* of three continents, with Asia occupying half the circle and Europe only a quarter. He describes how the Moslems are threatening to take over the whole world, as they already have Asia, which was the cradle of Christianity, and Africa, which produced so many of the fathers of the church. 'The learned will know what I am talking about,' the pope assures his audience: 'thirdly there is the remaining region of the world, Europe, of which we Christians inhabit only a small part.'[6] The pope's comment is strange at first sight, as the Moslems in 1095 possessed only the southern half of Spain together with the Balearic islands and Sicily. But it becomes explicable in the light of his next statement: 'For who will say that all those barbarians who live in the remote islands of the glacial ocean are Christians, as they lead a monstrous life?' Northern Europeans, some of whom in Norway and Sweden had indeed not been converted to Christianity at the time of Urban's speech, are therefore equated by the Mediterranean pope with the sea monsters who live at the world's end.

According to the Jerusalem-centred world view, England bordered the remote islands in the glacial ocean such as Iceland and the Orkneys. England was on the perimeter of the circle, 'the outer edge of the earth's extent' as the Anglo-Saxon Aelfric had described it.[7] Wales and Ireland were consequently on the furthest borders of the world (according to Gerald of Wales), and beyond Scotland there was no habitation (in the words of the Declaration of Arbroath). In the thirteenth century the schoolman Robert the Englishman was obliged to acknowledge in his lectures on cosmology that England was too far north to be included in the recognized climes or regions of geographers. 'But the reason for this', Robert explains, 'is not because it is unfit to live in, as some will have it, but because it was not inhabited at the time of the division into climes.'[8] This slur on England's good name leads Robert, like other medieval writers, to launch into a paean praising the country's fertility and climate.

The elements of such patriotic descriptions had remained much the same since Bede (himself drawing on the works of Nennius and Gildas) set the pattern for them in the opening chapter of his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in the early eighth century. Indeed just as Jerusalem-centred maps of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were less accurate than those of the earlier Middle Ages, so descriptions of England's geographical characteristics show a decline in precision. This is because even those learned in astronomy and the physical science of the time, like Robert the Englishman, preferred Geoffrey of Monmouth's exaggerations to the circumstantial work of Bede. Geoffrey, describing Britain rather than England as such, calls it 'the best of islands'.[9] It provides in unfailing plenty everything that is needed: all sorts of minerals, all kinds of crops from the rich soil, every variety of game in its forests; there are fat cattle on its pastures and green meadows, bees gathering honey from its beautiful flowers, plentiful fish in its rivers and lakes, and people lulled happily to sleep on the banks of its babbling brooks. (Geoffrey borrowed this last image from Gildas, who had written in the sixth century.) Britain also – and this is Geoffrey's main subject – has an extraordinarily distinguished history, beginning with its formation by the Trojan Brutus and progressing through Lear and Cymbeline to Arthur who had dominated Europe.

All this is of course exaggerated and some of it is absurd. Nevertheless such optimism was echoed by other writers. For example Richard of Devizes in the 1190s describes a French Jew persuading a fellow Frenchman to go to England, that land flowing with milk and honey where no one who strives to make an honest living dies poor. Although by modern European and American standards life in the Middle Ages was poor, nasty, brutish and short, that was not the universal opinion of those who experienced it. They veered between extremes of delight in the bountifulness of the earth and its seasons, like William the Conqueror's fellow ruler the troubadour William IX of Aquitaine, and by contrast deep awareness, among reforming monks like St Bernard in particular, of the transitoriness of life and the immediacy of divine retribution. Over the centuries patriotic historians and writers developed Geoffrey of Monmouth's ideal of the best of islands into the famous description in Shakespeare's *Richard II* of:

> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
> This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings …

In one way at least England actually was pleasanter in the twelfth century than now, and that was in its climate. In his description of the Vale of Gloucester, William of Malmesbury comments that 'the frequency of vines there is more concentrated, their produce more fruitful, and their taste sweeter than in any other area of England.'[10] This implies, and there is other evidence to support it, that viticulture was quite common in twelfth-century England. Even the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's pessimistic account of how things went from bad to worse during the nineteen years of Stephen's reign concludes with a description of the Norman abbot of Peterborough, Martin of Bec, planting a vineyard as part of his improvements to the abbey. William of Malmesbury adds that the wines from the Gloucester area could bear comparison with French ones, whereas by implication those from less favoured areas could not. He wrote this in the 1120s when northern Europe was still enjoying a relatively warm period before cold and rain began to predominate in the latter half of the thirteenth century. At the time therefore when England was ruled by incomers from France, its climate (in the south at least) would not have made such a strong contrast with their own. Nevertheless England never was a large wine-producing country. Medieval Englishmen characteristically drank beer and they were notorious abroad for consuming too much (see pages 253–4 below).

## England's destiny

England's place in the medieval world could be viewed in different lights. Certainly England was physically remote from the centre and seemed to those who had only theoretical knowledge of it to be on the outer periphery of civilization. On the other hand it was reputed to be rich, in both minerals and agricultural produce, and its climate was benign. Although the wealth of England was probably exaggerated both at home and abroad, it served as a strong inducement to conquerors and adventurers. Eadmer of Canterbury tells a story of how in the reign of Cnut the bishop of Benevento in central Italy went on a fund-raising tour on behalf of his church, which claimed to possess the body of the apostle St Bartholomew: the bishop was offering for sale an arm from this precious relic. Passing through Italy and France he decided to proceed to England when he heard talk of its wealth and of how

he was likely to get a better price there than anywhere else. In this the bishop succeeded, selling the arm to Queen Emma for several pounds of silver. Eadmer uses this story to illustrate how in those days, before the coming of Lanfranc and the Norman reformers, the English valued relics above everything. For us the story illustrates England's reputation for wealth, which Eadmer thought a commonplace as he was writing in the reigns of William Rufus and Henry I when the treasures of England and the loot amassed by its Norman conquerors were the talk of Europe.

Throughout the twelfth century the kings of England were reputed to be wealthier than the Capetian kings of France. William Rufus, writes Abbot Suger of St Denis, was 'opulent, a spender of the treasures of the English and a marvellous dealer in and payer of knights', whereas his own king, Louis VI, was short of money.[11] To display their wealth and power the Norman kings built on an unprecedented scale. The Tower of London, completed by Rufus in 1097, was the greatest stone keep yet built in western Europe. Similarly Westminster Hall, which was also the achievement of Rufus, was the largest roofed space (238 feet × 68 feet), being more than twice the size of the emperor's hall at Goslar. Yet Rufus is reported to have commented that it was only 'half as big as it should have been'.[12] The new cathedral at Winchester (533 feet long), where Rufus was brought for burial after being killed in the New Forest, was surpassed in length only by the third abbey church of Cluny, which was nearing completion at the same time.

Such displays of power gave a sense of reality to beliefs that the kings of England were destined to play a dominant role in European politics. William of Malmesbury states that, if belief in the transmigration of souls were permitted, the soul of Julius Caesar had entered Rufus. 'He had huge ambitions,' writes William, 'and he would have achieved them if he could have spun out the tissue of the Fates, or broken through and escaped from the violence of fortune. Such was his force of mind that he was audacious enough to promise himself any kingdom whatsoever.'[13] The best monastic historians like William enjoyed composing obituaries of this sort which evoked the antique world of pagan heroes striving against the gods. Such writing in a classical idiom was as Romanesque as the sculpture and painting of the time; it used classical motifs but the essentials were medieval. The image of Rufus as a conquering Caesar, cut off in his prime, was taken further by Gaimar in his romantic *History of the English*, which was

written in *c.*1137 in French rhyming couplets and is here translated into prose: 'On account of his great nobleness all his neighbours were subject to him, and if he could have reigned longer he would have gone to Rome to claim the ancient right to that country which Brennius and Belinus had.'[14] Gaimar here associates the career of Rufus with Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, which had just been published. Brennius and Belinus, the sackers of Rome in 390 BC, were (in Geoffrey's version) British kings who had first conquered the Gauls and the Germans before uniting against Rome. The fantastic achievements of this pair, like those of Arthur himself, fulfilled (in Geoffrey's story) the prophecy of the goddess Diana, who had told the Trojan Brutus to seek an island in the ocean beyond the setting of the sun and the realms of Gaul; there he would found a second Troy and from him would descend a line of kings who would make subject the 'circle of the whole earth'.[15]

Geoffrey's prophecy of Diana is a myth which explains the ambivalent position of Britain. It is an island which lies on the periphery of the earth, beyond the setting of the sun as seen from the centre, but its rulers originate from the centre and are destined to return there to rule. It is impossible to know how much of this myth Geoffrey made up and how much of it derived from oral traditions or writings in books now lost. What is not in doubt, however, is the popularity of Geoffrey's work: it is extant in over two hundred medieval manuscripts (more than Bede's *History*), fifty of which date from the twelfth century. It was translated from Geoffrey's Latin into French, English and Welsh and one-third of the total number of manuscripts are in continental Europe. These facts make Geoffrey's history the most popular work emanating from medieval Britain and perhaps the most popular of all medieval histories.

As significant as Geoffrey's popularity is the credence he was given by reputable and scholarly writers. Thus Robert the Englishman includes Geoffrey's prophecy of Diana in his lectures as an explanation of why England is prosperous despite its lying beyond the climes. By his time Geoffrey's history had been incorporated into numerous English chronicles, along with the Old Testament and miscellaneous late Roman sources, in narratives of the seven ages of the world from its creation up to the Christian era. This illustrates the medieval scribal tendency to add new information to old rather than to evaluate it critically. The acceptance of Geoffrey is the more remarkable consider-

ing that William of Newburgh in the latter half of the twelfth century had put forward the objections which modern critics repeat. William compares Geoffrey's narratives with Bede's and concludes that Geoffrey 'has dressed up in colourful Latin style under the honest name of history tales of Arthur taken from old British legends and augmented by his own inventions'.[16] Geoffrey's history triumphantly survived such criticism because William's comments had a very limited circulation (a problem for any critic of a popular work before the invention of printing) and also perhaps because Geoffrey told people what they wanted to hear. He put the history of Britain into a grand and dynamic context which fed the ambitions of the Anglo-Norman conquerors. Although Geoffrey's book concerned Britain rather than England and might have been interpreted as Celtic propaganda against the Normans, it was dedicated to Robert earl of Gloucester, Henry I's distinguished bastard son. Indeed Geoffrey went further and wished to attribute the work not to his humble self but to Earl Robert, so that it too would be the offspring of the illustrious king.

The best illustration of how Geoffrey's history inflated Englishmen's sense of their own importance is William Fitz Stephen's description of London in the time of Becket. It is the most famous city in the world according to William. To it merchants bring gold from Arabia, oil from Babylon, gems from the Nile, silk from China, wines from France, and furs from the Baltic lands and Russia. The references to gold from Arabia and gems from the Nile were certainly clichés of the time rather than a factual description of trade goods. On the other hand French wines and a variety of northern furs were imported. As in Geoffrey's work fact, fiction and classical allusions are inextricably mixed together in William's account. He reveals his debt to Geoffrey by stating, 'on the good faith of chroniclers', that London is far older than Rome because it was founded by the Trojan Brutus.[17] William likewise cites the prophecy of Diana concerning Brutus, though he ascribes it to the oracle of Apollo. In this version the second Troy of the prophecy is London, and the ruler from Britain in particular who subjected the world is Constantine, the greatest of the emperors from a Christian point of view.

A modern scientist rightly dismisses as nonsense medieval *mappae mundi* which make Jerusalem the centre of the world and histories which claim that London was founded by the Trojans. Nevertheless appreciation of such ideas is essential to a historian because they gave

twelfth-century people, however erroneously, a concept of their place in space and time. England's rulers believed that they lived on the edge of the world and increasingly in the twelfth century they aspired to reach the centre, that Jerusalem which was both a real place and a symbol of contact with the divine, the umbilical cord of the earth. Viewed in this way, the aims of Richard I in particular can be seen in their medieval perspective. His ten-year reign (1189–99), of which only six months were spent in England, was not an aberration from the practice of his predecessors but a progression from it. The Norman kings (William the Conqueror, William Rufus and Henry I) had spent less than half their time in England and Richard's father, Henry II, did likewise. Richard was not much criticized by chroniclers for going on crusade and taxing England so heavily. On the contrary, his exactions were blamed on his counsellors and he himself was written about as a hero who had raised England's name by fighting for Jerusalem. His successors, King John and Henry III, spent much more of their time in England but that was not from choice. Rather it was because they were being driven out of their continental lands and out of Mediterranean politics by their rivals, the great French kings, Philip Augustus and St Louis.

The ambitions of England's rulers were fed by a variety of historical myths and chance circumstances. Paradoxically they were given literary shape during Stephen's reign (1135–54) when the kingdom was torn by civil war. This is the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, of Gaimar's *History of the English*, and of the speech made at the battle of the Standard in 1138 which celebrated the defeat of the Scots. In the earliest report of this speech, which is attributed to the bishop of the Orkneys, the 'great men of England and the distinguished men of Normandy' are reminded of their pre-eminence: 'No one resists you with impunity; brave France has tried and taken shelter; fierce England lay captive; rich Apulia flourished anew under your rule; renowned Jerusalem and noble Antioch both submitted themselves to you.'[18] This is one of the few sources which explicitly links the Normans who conquered England with the achievements of Robert Guiscard in Italy and of his son, Bohemond, who became prince of Antioch during the First Crusade. If this speech were made by the bishop of the Orkneys (in another version it is attributed to the Yorkshire baron Walter Espec), it would have served also to link these islands on the edge

of the world with the centre in Jerusalem, as the Normans had reached both. In the versions in which it has come down to us this speech, like Urban II's at Clermont before the First Crusade, is too literary and learned to have directly inspired knights on the battlefield. What it does indicate, however, is the way the Norman victories of the eleventh century had developed into a mythology of conquest in the twelfth which united English and Norman ambitions. All the people of England, according to the chronicler Henry of Huntingdon, replied 'Amen! Amen!' to this speech.

## Interpretations of English history

Historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, like their medieval counterparts, have reacted ambivalently to the fact that England was placed on the edge of the medieval world. Some Victorians proudly emphasized England's splendid isolation, while others welcomed the Norman Conquest. Thomas Carlyle's approach was as extravagant as anything in Geoffrey of Monmouth. Without the Normans and Plantagenets, he asked, what would England have been? He trenchantly replied: 'A gluttonous race of Jutes and Angles, capable of no great combinations; lumbering about in potbellied equanimity; not dreaming of heroic toil and silence and endurance, such as leads to the high places of the Universe and the golden mountain-tops where dwell the Spirits of the Dawn.'[19] Edward Freeman, on the other hand, with prejudices almost as explicit, saw the strength of England coming not from the forceful drilling of the Normans but from its endurance of this fiery trial. For Freeman England belonged to the Teutonic north; indeed it is a more purely Teutonic country than Germany itself. 'We Englishmen', he wrote, 'live in an island and have always moved in a sort of world of our own.'[20] This gave the natives the strength to resist and absorb the incomers: first the Normans, then the accession of the Angevins 'which was almost equivalent to a second conquest', and finally the 'fresh swarms of foreigners under Henry III'. Where Carlyle and Freeman agree is in crediting the conquerors with encouraging English unity.

Popular Victorian historians like Carlyle and Freeman could not avoid a polemical style when discussing England's medieval identity because they wrote for an audience imbued with national feeling.

Historians of all the European powers in the nineteenth century laboured to produce scholarly editions of the records of their peoples and to explain their national significance to the public. The problem was that the facts of medieval history were often at variance with the pattern of nineteenth-century national states. Who did Charlemagne belong to, for example, France or Germany? And how did the most powerful government of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the papacy, fit into this nationalist scheme? French and German scholars coped with the overlap in their record sources sometimes by agreement but more often by printing the same documents in the *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France* and in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. English historians faced a more manageable task, as the Anglo-Saxon kingdom had developed a distinct identity precociously early and some medieval writers had believed (with Freeman) that Englishmen moved in a sort of world of their own. The special problem for English national history came with the Norman Conquest, as it appeared at a stroke to destroy the distinctiveness of England and subject it to continental domination in military, ecclesiastical and cultural terms. Furthermore, as Freeman points out, this domination persisted beyond the Normans through the Angevins and into the reign of Henry III.

The most influential Victorian historian to tackle the problem of England's medieval identity was William Stubbs in his authoritative *Select Charters*, first published in 1870, and in the three-volume *Constitutional History*, which followed between 1873 and 1878. These works were overtly nationalist, as their purpose was to make English students understand their own institutions as well as those of ancient Greece and Rome on which they had been reared. These institutions, Stubbs argued, 'possess a living interest for every nation that realizes its identity, and [they] have exercised on the wellbeing of the civilized world an influence not inferior certainly to that of the classical nations'.[21] In other words, English national consciousness was to be identified and nurtured by studying the origins of its monarchy, law courts and parliament. At his most ambitious Stubbs was proposing an alternative curriculum for higher education in which the future rulers of England at Oxford and Cambridge would read their Latin in Magna Carta and Matthew Paris instead of Cicero and Livy. This would serve to make history respectable as a subject for academic study and it would also be a better preparation for governing because (in Stubbs's opinion at

least) English history was more relevant than that of Greece and Rome.

Stubbs was too knowledgeable and intelligent a scholar not to know that the flaw in his approach was that in the period on which he concentrated, between the Norman Conquest and the reign of Edward I (the same period as this book concerns), many English institutions were similar to continental ones in their outward forms and nomenclature. Royal courts of justice, fiefs, ecclesiastical councils, parliaments, communes and liberties were not unique to England. Although Stubbs admitted the deep and wide basis which medieval England shared with the continent, he argued that it was a mistake to think that customs 'are borrowed or derived in their matured form by one national system from another'.[22] Taking his metaphor from the railways, which were such a prominent feature of Victorian England, he argued instead that 'the history of institutions, as of nations, runs through occasional tunnels'.[23] These hide the continuous line by which for example medieval boroughs grew out of Anglo-Saxon burghs, or parliament out of the witan. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century institutions were of course connected with their Anglo-Saxon predecessors. Stubbs was mistaken not in this assertion but in his insistence that institutional practice could not be derived by one system from another. Boroughs and parliament in his view had to progress in a single line from their Anglo-Saxon beginnings, even if parts of the line were concealed from view. They could not be significantly influenced by Flemish towns or the French *parlement*, however close the similarities and nomenclature might appear to be, because it was an axiom that each national system created its own institutions and gave to its people a unique and inimitable character. This axiom derived from the fashionable Hegelian philosophy of the time and it also justified Stubbs's hope that English students would realize their identity by studying their history. If that identity were confused with that of France, Germany or Spain, the wrong conclusions might be drawn.

To ensure that only the right message reached his readers Stubbs avoided expressions which belonged in his opinion 'more properly to French and German history'.[24] He disliked the word 'commune', for example, as a description of an association because it was French. Consequently when the rebel barons of 1258 formed 'le commun de Engleterre' Stubbs translated this as 'the commonalty of England'. Whereas 'commune' had associations with revolution and France, both

in the thirteenth century and in the nineteenth, 'commonalty' was an archaic English term for a corporation (the mayor and 'commonalty' of a borough) and also for the common people (the commons as distinct from the lords). These usages suited Stubbs's purpose, as 'commonalty' sounded distinctively English and its archaism suggested something conservative rather than revolutionary. Nevertheless this translation was misleading, as the 'commune' of 1258 was in origin a conspiratorial association of barons associated in particular with the Frenchman Simon de Montfort (as explained in chapter 14 below). Its antecedents were in revolutions in continental towns in the twelfth century rather than in the common folk of England.

Although the materials for medieval English history have not substantially changed since the Victorian period, attitudes to it have. The medieval past no longer has to bear the burden which Stubbs imposed on it of justifying England's imperial mission and demonstrating the unique value of its constitutional arrangements. Instead of insisting on a linear growth of institutions from Anglo-Saxon roots, this book emphasizes how England's rulers were influenced by movements of power and ideas from overseas. These influences would have been felt even without the Norman Conquest and the Angevin kings, as they were transmitted by clergy and scholars as much as by knights. Nevertheless the fact that England, like southern Italy and the kingdom of Jerusalem, was conquered by aliens helped to accelerate and reinforce change. Highlighting foreign rule in this way does not obscure England's identity. On the contrary, it clarifies and accentuates it by viewing it as far as possible through medieval eyes. In that Jerusalem-centred world England stood on the outer rim of Europe and its rulers were drawn towards the centre. They knew the world was round, but they viewed it not as a mere fact of modern cartography but as an image of faith and hope. Like the rose windows and circular mazes found in the great Gothic cathedrals, or the round table of King Arthur, the Jerusalem-centred world radiated supernatural power and mystery.

## England and Britain

What exactly was meant by England? Where were its frontiers? How did it fit into Britain? These were contentious questions which went

far beyond geography. Britain could be readily represented on a medieval map as the island on the edge of the world which the Romans had called *Britannia*. England's boundaries were not so easily defined. The word *Englalond* is not recorded in Old English until the eleventh century, when it describes the territory of 'the kingdom of the English' (*regnum Anglorum* in Latin). The ideal of a united English people (the *Angelcynn* in Old English) had brought together the different Anglo-Saxon kingdoms into a single unit which by 1050 formed a country called 'England'. The territory of this English kingdom was clearly defined to the south and the east by the sea, though it was also true that the greatest threats of invasion came from these directions: from Normandy, Flanders, Denmark and Norway.

Within Britain there were no firm land frontiers to the west and north designating the limits of England, though there were old boundary lines in the form of Offa's Dyke and Hadrian's Wall. The English described their opponents to the west as the Welsh, which originally simply meant 'foreigners'. They were perceived as different especially because they spoke their own language, which fed a whole literature and rich culture with its roots in the Romano-British past. Welsh intellectuals described themselves as Britons. In the north was the kingdom of the Scots, which was growing in power by 1050 as it incorporated part of English Northumbria as well as the old Pictish–Scottish kingdom. Whereas the Welsh were relatively homogenous in their Celtic culture, the Scots were extraordinarily diverse as they incorporated Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Pictish and Norse elements. The Norwegian kings were as great a threat to the Scots as the English, as their sea power extended all round the Scottish coasts and islands. In 1098 King Edgar conceded to Magnus Barelegs king of Norway all the islands to the west of Scotland, including the holy island of Iona which was the burial place of the early Scottish kings.

The characteristics which made the English a distinct people or nation had been articulated in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in the eighth century and constantly repeated by historians since. The message of Bede's history, which was all the more effective because of his careful chronology and use of documents, was that the English people were deservedly superior to the Britons and Celts, who had betrayed the incoming English by neglecting to convert them to Christianity. By the just judgement of God, the argument ran, the Britons had been driven westwards to the peripheries of the island (to

the shores of Cornwall and the Atlantic Ocean and to the inhospitable mountains of Wales and Scotland), where they eked out a wretched existence as herdsmen and shepherds. This made sense of the political and economic geography of Britain where the English had by far the most arable land.

The English sense of their predominant power within Britain had led Anglo-Saxon kings to lay claim to the whole island, even though they could not enforce such a claim on the ground. The significance of the Norman conquerors was that they might succeed where their predecessors had failed. By establishing himself as the lawful successor of Edward the Confessor (1042–66), William the Conqueror took on his purported role as king of the whole of Britain. Most remarkably, in a document from Winchester Edward the Confessor had been entitled 'the industrious king of the English and of all the islands and all the peoples existing roundabout'.[25] If the English king were to make good this claim he would have to defeat the Norwegians' sea power as well as a variety of kings in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Nevertheless the Normans were quick to take up the English claim to jurisdiction over the whole of Britain, even in its extended sense of the British Isles. At the council of Winchester in 1072 Lanfranc, the lawyer from Italy and Norman abbot who was William the Conqueror's archbishop of Canterbury, had passages from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* read out loud in order to demonstrate that Canterbury had jurisdiction 'over the whole island which they call Britain and over Ireland as well'.[26]

In response, Pope Gregory VII authorized Lanfranc in 1073 to extirpate vice among the Irish in particular, 'but also in the island of the English'.[27] The papal injunction to extirpate alleged Celtic sexual vices was significant, as this was the justification in the twelfth century for Henry II's invasion of Ireland. In calling Britain 'the island of the English' the drafters in Rome of Gregory VII's letter were probably not making a careless geographical error. Rather, prompted by Lanfranc's envoys who had learned their Anglo-Saxon history, the pope was making a political claim. The Latin translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle done in the 980s by Ealdorman Aethelweard declared that 'Britain is now called England, thereby assuming the name of the victors'.[28] By describing Britain as English and giving the see of Canterbury moral authority over the Irish, Gregory VII gave the Norman conquerors authority to extend their power throughout the British

Isles. Paradoxically the Normans attempted to conquer Britain in the name of the English whom they themselves had conquered.

This was the complex ideological basis for the remarkable expansion of 'England' within the 'British Isles', which Sir Rees Davies has called *The First English Empire*. He dated the beginning of this empire from 1093, when Normans were involved in the killing of Máel Coluim Cenmór (Malcolm III 'Canmore'), king of Scots, and Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of Deheubarth or South Wales. In the long term the struggles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were to show that Britain could not be reduced to an 'island of the English'. War and colonization clarified and emphasized the cultural differences between England and its neighbours. In place of an undifferentiated island of Britain, the maps made by Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century (see page 256 below) show England (*Anglia*), Wales (*Wallia*) and Scotland (*Scotia*) as distinct territories. This was to be the enduring reality of English history and identity.

## NOTES

[1] *Annales Monastici* (RS 36), vol. 1, p. 339. Cf. ch. 12, n. 22 below.
[2] *Historia Ecclesiastica* ed. M. Chibnall (1969–81), vol. 2, p. 269.
[3] Letter to the bishop of Metz, trans. B. Pullan, *Sources for the History of Medieval Europe* (1966), p. 150.
[4] T.A. Heslop, 'Eadwine and his Portrait', *The Eadwine Psalter* ed. M. Gibson, T.A. Heslop, R.W. Pfaff (1992), p. 180.
[5] *De Gestis Pontificum* (RS 52), p. 4.
[6] *De Gestis Regum* (RS 90), p. 395.
[7] *Lives of the Saints* vol. 2, pp. 290–1, cited by F. Barlow, *The English Church 1000–1066* (2nd edition, 1979), p. 22.
[8] *EHD* 3, p. 998.
[9] *Historia Regum Britanniae* ed. A. Griscom (1929), p. 221.
[10] *De Gestis Pontificum*, p. 292.
[11] *Vita Lodovici VI* ed. H. Waquet (1929), p. 8.
[12] *Henrici Huntendunensis Historia* (RS 74), p. 231. R.H.C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (1976), p. 121.
[13] *De Gestis Regum*, p. 379.
[14] *Estoire des Engleis* ed. A. Bell (Anglo-Norman Text Soc. 1960), lines 5963–8. Ed. and trans. I. Short (2009), lines 5971–4.
[15] *Historia Regum Britanniae*, p. 239.
[16] *Chronicles* (RS 82), vol. 1, p. 12.

[17] *Becket Materials* (RS 67), vol. 3, p. 8. C. Brooke and G. Keir, *London 800–1216* (1975), pp. 258–9.
[18] *Henrici Huntendunensis*, p. 262. J. Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (1976), p. 353. Davis, *The Normans*, pp. 66–7.
[19] *History of Friedrich II of Prussia* (1858), vol. 1, p. 415.
[20] *Historical Essays: First Series* (1871), p. 50.
[21] *Select Charters* (8th edition, 1895), p. v (preface of 1870).
[22] ibid, p. vii.
[23] ibid., p. viii.
[24] ibid., p. vii.
[25] F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (1970), p. 136.
[26] *Letters of Lanfranc* ed. H. Clover and M. Gibson (1979), p. 51.
[27] ibid., p. 67.
[28] R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire* (2000), pp. 49, 52, 202.

# PART I

# The Normans (1066–1135)

The Normans took their name from the 'Northmen', the Viking pirates who had attacked both England and France in the ninth century. In the same way as King Alfred acknowledged Viking settlement in the northern part of England, the Frankish king, Charles the Simple, ceded his northern territory at the mouth of the Seine in 911 to Rollo, whom the Normans recognized as their first duke. Norman history in the next century is very obscure. By the time William the Conqueror was born, however (in 1027 or 1028), the Normans had created a distinct identity for themselves. Their earliest historian Dudo of St Quentin recorded a story about the homage done by Rollo to Charles the Simple. The Frankish bishops insisted that Rollo should kneel down and kiss the king's foot. Rollo refused, although he permitted one of his warriors to approach the king. This man indeed kissed the royal foot, but he did so without kneeling down by tipping the king backwards off his throne amidst the laughter of the Normans.

This story reveals more about the Normans of William the Conqueror's time than about the events of 911. They were proud and ferocious warriors without respect for rank or tradition other than their own. It was as a typical Norman that Robert Guiscard took the pope prisoner at Civitate in 1053 and went on to become duke of Apulia and Calabria ostensibly by the grace of God and St Peter. His son Bohemond impressed himself similarly on the memory of Anna Comnena, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor Alexius, when he towered above both crusaders and Greeks in the imperial tent inspiring admiration and terror: 'A certain charm hung about the man but it was marred by a general sense of the horrible. For in the whole of his

body he showed himself implacable and savage both in his size and glance. He was no man's slave, subject to none of all the world; for such are great natures, people say, even if they are of humble origin.'[1] These Mediterranean Normans, descendants or followers of Tancred of Hauteville, were only remotely connected with the conquerors of England. Nevertheless there were contacts between them. When William the Conqueror's half-brother, Odo of Bayeux earl of Kent, was arrested in 1082, he was believed to have been planning an expedition to Italy to make himself pope, which would have linked up the Normans in England with those in Italy. The similarities between the two groups moreover were noticed by medieval writers, even if only as wishful thinking. William of Poitiers in his account of the conquest of England (written within a decade of the battle of Hastings) mentions Norman triumphs in Italy and Byzantium, and the author of *The Song of the Battle of Hastings* (which may not be strictly contemporary) has William the Conqueror exhort his men before the battle as: 'Apulian and Calabrian, Sicilian, whose darts fly in swarms; Normans, ripe for incomparable achievements!'[2]

The Normans had a mixture of contradictory qualities which chroniclers delighted to describe. In Italy Geoffrey Malaterra (who may have been of Norman origin himself) commented on their passion for wealth and power, though they despised what they had and were always looking for more. Another contradiction was their love of flamboyant dress and their impulsiveness; and yet, when necessity demanded, they could endure all the rigours of a disciplined military life. In England William of Malmesbury, independently of Geoffrey, described similar contradictions: 'The Normans were – and still are [William was writing in about 1125] – proudly apparelled and delicate about their food, though not excessively. They are a race inured to war and scarcely know how to live without it … They live in huge houses with moderation. They envy their equals and wish to excel their superiors. They plunder their subjects, though they defend them from others. They are faithful to their lords, though a slight offence makes them perfidious. They measure treachery by its chance of success.'[3] Such contradictions were resolved by the logic of war. The Normans were so formidable because they were warlords operating in a Europe that was beginning to be more settled and prosperous. As descendants of the Vikings they were the last barbarian invaders. But they had learned a great deal since the time of Rollo's legendary act

of insubordination to the Frankish king. The art of war, like the art of building in stone or the 'liberal arts' of the schoolmen, had become more sophisticated in the eleventh century, and Norman knights were its chief exponents.

The best monument to Norman military methods is the Bayeux Tapestry, though it was probably made by English artists. Its most striking and recurrent features are the groups of knights in chainmail, equipped with long shields and lances, charging on their warhorses. They give the same impression of vigour and ferocity which Anna Comnena observed in Bohemond. The 'general sense of the horrible' is conveyed too in the Tapestry in its lower border where the dead are depicted in terrible postures lying amid a litter of abandoned shields, broken swords and wounded horses. The importance of eating well, which William of Malmesbury had commented on, is also graphically illustrated in the Tapestry. The first action the Normans take on landing on English soil is to seize livestock, slaughter it with their battle axes, roast it on spits and serve it up at a banquet presided over by the warrior bishop, Odo of Bayeux. From there the Normans move on to building a castle at Hastings and burning villages. The Tapestry's emphasis on the practicalities and daily routines of war indicates the Normans' professionalism. Duke William, like the duke of Wellington, knew that battles are won by attention to details of supply. A large section of the Tapestry shows the Normans' thorough preparation for the invasion: trees being cut down and made into planks; ships being specially built and launched; the loading of supplies (coats of mail, swords, lances, helmets); and finally the putting into the ships of the Norman knights' most precious possession, their highly trained warhorses. Almost as many horses as men are shown in the ships crossing the Channel and Duke William's own charger is individually depicted at the start of the battle.

In the Bayeux Tapestry the invaders are not described as 'Normans' but as 'Franci', that is 'Franks' or 'Frenchmen'. Similarly the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle describes them as 'Frencyscan'. In its account of the events of 1066 King Harold defeated the Normans (the 'Normen', that is, the Norwegians) at Stamford Bridge, before himself being killed by the French at Hastings. Similarly the Norman kings of England invariably addressed their people in charters as 'French and English' and not as 'Normans and English'. These usages raise doubts about the cohesion of Norman identity, despite Norman and other chroniclers'

descriptions of themselves. The solution lies in the relative position of the observer. The Normans were generally described as Frenchmen in England to distinguish them from the Northmen and because they came from France (Francia). Furthermore a fair number of the 'French' who fought at Hastings were not Normans anyway, but men from Brittany, Maine, Picardy and Flanders. In France itself, on the other hand, they were described as Normans to distinguish them from Angevins, Poitevins, Gascons and so on. Although the Normans are called a 'race' (*gens*) by some contemporaries (Orderic Vitalis, for example), their cohesion lay essentially in their beliefs about themselves rather than in genealogy or blood relationships. Scarcely any Norman family could reliably trace its descent back before the year AD 1000, and their greatest duke was generally known in the Middle Ages not as the Conqueror but as William the Bastard.

Their lack of distinguished ancestry made the Normans' ideology of war and power all the more important to them. They had to fight all the harder to dominate the oldest institutions in Europe (the papacy, the Byzantine Empire and the Anglo-Saxon kingdom) and they were ready to absorb men and ideas from any quarter which would help them. In military terms they embodied the greatness of the barbarian Franks who had conquered Roman Gaul and created the Carolingian empire. But they reflected too the new French knighthood whose prowess was enshrined in the *Song of Roland*. By the twelfth century, as a consequence rather than a cause of their success, the victors of Hastings were: 'You whom France famed for nobility has bred, chivalrous warriors, renowned young men whom God chooses and favours!'[4]

Although the Normans were essentially warlords, they were a force much more complex than mere barbarians or brigands. A contradiction at first sight is the way they succeeded in attracting the two greatest churchmen and intellectuals of their time, Lanfranc and Anselm from south of the Alps, to their cause. These two men built up the new monastery at Bec in William the Conqueror's time into one of the most famous and enterprising schools in Europe, and they became in succession archbishops of Canterbury. This paradox between the Normans' love of war and their advancement of religion did not escape the notice of William of Malmesbury. He says, exaggerating the contrast between the old and the new, that 'by their arrival in England they revived the observance of religion which had grown lifeless.

Everywhere you see churches in villages, and monasteries in towns and cities, erected in a new style of architecture.'[5]

The great Norman churches, epitomized by Durham cathedral above all, are now the best memorial to the aspirations of the Normans. Their ambition and love of display are seen in the massive proportions of the nave; their blend of the traditional and the new in its Romanesque arches and cylindrical pillars on which is imposed the first rib-vault to roof a European cathedral; the demands of war dictate the choice of site on a precipitous peninsula, which is further defended by the bishop's huge castle alongside the cathedral. The Normans built their churches and castles beside each other on fortified hills, as if the surrounding population were pagan hordes instead of native Christians of long standing. Building stone had never before been massed on such a scale to symbolize both man's mastery of his environment and the individual's puniness in the face of power. In a brilliant and ultimately inexplicable interlude the Normans commanded the forces of their time and identified divine authority with themselves.

## NOTES

[1] D.C. Douglas, *The Norman Achievement* (1969), p. 56. J. Hermans, 'The Byzantine View of the Normans', *Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 2 (1979), ed. R. Allen Brown, p. 87. *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena* trans. E.R.A. Sewter (1969), p. 422.

[2] *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* ed. C. Morton and H. Muntz (1972), p. 19.

[3] *De Gestis Regum* (RS 90), p. 306.

[4] *Carmen*, p. 17.

[5] *De Gestis Regum*, p. 306. In general see Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (2000).